/11 cont./

775 "No spirits of the dead remain on the world; I have never yet seen any spirits, and I tell you only what I know. People talk a lot, but they know nothing." My informant thus concluded his statements concerning the beyond.

778 A sacred fire is unknown to the Dama Bushmen.

372 A youths' initiation is still performed by the !Kung in
881 the east. Among the Dama it is no longer held. On the other
184 hand, initiations for girls are still held, but they refused to give me any information about the details.

584 Marriage depends upon the free consent of the girl. To be sure, through the persuasion of the parents the girls always say yes. Once the girl has the initiation ceremonies behind her, a suitor soon approaches her to tell her that "she has now grown up and can become a wife." If the girl consents (after consultation with her parents), the suitor goes to his parents. He does not
585 consult his future parents-in-law. The bridegroom must bring a fat ox and a number of goats to the wedding. The parents of the bride likewise kill some animals. The actual ceremony consists of the bridegroom rubbing a thick layer of fat mixed with red ocher over the entire body of the bride, while the men sing:

[539] jejeje jejeje !hawawa !hawawa.

!hawawa means wedding. At the same time, the women and girls clap their hands.

177 Bantu influence is already strongly apparent in the mar-
582 riage laws. Thus, it is possible to "marry" even little girls, whom the man keeps with him until they are sexually mature. A
595 man may have as many wives as he wants. The first wife is not consulted when the husband wants to take more wives. My question concerning this matter was met with an outburst of laughter from the yellow-brown circle.

586 It is possible to send a wife away, but this is regarded as improper and indecent, and it is taken as an insult by the wife's relatives.

582 [12] A man can look for a wife wherever he wishes; only marriage with the children of the father's siblings, especially of his sister, is prohibited.

611 The daughter belongs to the family of the man, the son to the family of the wife.

/14 cont./

000 chronic, good-natured imbiber . . .

776 In heaven there is one god, Erob. Lightning (dábara)
[821] and rain (!nanus) are sent by him. He calls heaven χ'ameiba.
This word is very interesting. It can mean both "place of the
/15/ souls (χ'a) " or "place of the χ'amab." The souls
[775] (um-ské) go to heaven after death. "This is what they say,"
said the man, "I haven't been there yet."

He did not know Gauab and Heiseb. Concerning other spirits, he said that people had mentioned them, but he did not believe in them. The spirits are supposedly called "gangarob."
756 The old Bushmen had neither doctors nor medicines against ill-
753 nesses. To my question about what made people ill, he responded with philosophical equanimity: "If one becomes ill, he is ill like an animal." He knew nothing about the sun (soris)
[821] and moon (χ'ab). A sacred fire is unknown to him.
[778]

224 Of greatest interest is his report, undoubtedly based
782 upon autopsy, concerning an initial offering at the hunt. I give the report in literal translation:

"Before people go out to the hunt, they meet at an omsati tree (//Khaia-aib). There a fire is made. Each hunter rips off a number of leaves, spits on them, and throws them into the fire as he shouts:

[539] Érob, Érob, áu tere! God, God, help us!

"When the game has been killed, one first cuts a piece each from the lung, liver, and stomach and throws each piece singly to the side, saying all the while:

Érob úre, Érob úre! God take, God take!

[539] "Then they start to eat."

This function is performed by the one who has killed the game.

881 The following was communicated to me concerning the
585 social organization:

There are initiation ceremonies. The celebration of the first menstruation originally coincided with the wedding. On the first day of menstruation the girl went into a pontok especially constructed for this purpose. Then there was dancing for two or three days, and after the cessation of the menses the girl went to

[36 cont.]

Dwellings

342 The dwelling of the Bushman consists of the simple windscreen, semicircular in form and about 150 centimeters high. On [177] several farms, however, even the Bushmen have taken to building [361] beehive huts in the Herero manner. The windscreens in a settle- [778] ment more or less form a circle, and the socha fire is to be found [372] near the windscreen of the village chief. During warm nights the [513] Bushmen do not sleep under the windscreen but outside it.

372

Fig. 3. Sticks for Firemaking, Kalahari Bushmen (Museum of Ethnology, Lurich).

[42 cont.]
000 622 312 778 [262] 784 the mother's kin group. One of the tasks of the village chief is the guarding of the socha fire. Socha means pure or sacred or taboo. Foods that are prohibited for certain age groups or for one sex are "socha" for these persons. The word "socha" seems to me to be a very ancient one, or else it is a loan word from another language. Every place has at least two fires: the ordinary one, which is 166 373 [596] 252 264 621 available to everyone, and the socha fire for men only. When the village moves to another place, the family head takes the socha fire along. During the march veldkost is gathered. Once they have arrived at the new place, the family head starts a new socha fire under a tall tree and roasts the veldkost. The boys leave im- [462] mediately and go hunting, while the women and girls set up the windscreen. Whatever the old man has roasted at the socha fire he is supposed to eat by himself; ordinarily this is what he does. Finally a messenger arrives and announces that a head of large game has been killed. Hours pass; the old man simply remains seated there, while the women and children make themselves comfortable in the new windscreen. [Fig. 15 appears here.] The game is brought to the socha fire, and the meat from the legs and [262] shoulder blade is cut off and given to the women and children, who are never allowed to eat meat from the bone. All the rest is [622] consumed by the men at the socha fire. The village chief also has the task of organizing the celebration for the first veld fruits. The hordes that I visited no longer practice this custom. Vedder has described it for the !Kung of Gaub.

178 622 When Lieutenant Fischer rode from Namutoni to the Okovanggo in 1908, the Bushmen everywhere still had a tight organization and a common leader. When Captain François went beyond Grootfontein for the first time, he was given considerable support by the chief of the !Kung Bushmen. It is worthy of note that the famed copper mines of Tsumeb, on which the welfare of Southwest Africa depends to a great extent, were discovered by a Bushman chief (2). Since then the eastern !Kung have not had a

2. He himself was a half-breed.

chief. The northern !Kung supposedly still have one. The oldest chief I heard of was "χ'amme," the lion. He was a great huntsman.

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
GIKwe

could have found his shallow pit at any time of the day or night.

Nobody was there; everyone had run away. We sat down and waited while Gai put his hands to his mouth and shouted, trying to summon the people back again. When nobody came or even answered him, he flung his pipe to the ground and marched off to find them among the bushes, alternately shouting to his hidden relatives and muttering to himself, for they might be far away and the day was getting warm.

We sat in the middle ground between the depressions so that we wouldn't risk stepping on or crushing anybody's hidden things, for, without knowing it, a European can in a moment trample through a Bushman's cache, breaking the delicate bone or wooden objects, bending the reed arrows, or crushing eggshell beads. Also, among certain groups of Bushmen, every fire has a man's side and a woman's side, determined by the position of the fire as you face the doorway of the scherm, the man's side being on the right, the woman's on the left. If a man sits on the woman's side, or where a woman has been sitting, he will become impotent and will also lose his power to hunt, and if a woman sits where a man has been sitting, she will get a disease in her vagina. Something intangible, invisible, but dangerously powerful, remains on the ground. We did not know which side was which of this werf's fires, or even for sure where the fires were; we did not even know that the Gikwe had this custom, for we had learned it from Kung Bushmen, but we knew that if they did they would not welcome our contaminating their ground. We would have liked to look around, but the best thing we could do was to keep our big boots and our bodies away from their delicate, fragile, almost invisible community.

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

green-leafed vegetables, and sometimes many of the people of the large extended bands come together to live, to hold important ceremonies which require many people, and to enjoy each other's company. Sometimes they separate into very small bands because they can now go anywhere they wish, each family going to the part of the veld where the type of food grows that the family most enjoys. There is water everywhere, in small seasonal waterholes, in shallow salt pans, in hollow trees, and the people thrive and grow quite fat. One of their favorite foods, one that grows in great abundance at this season, is a ground nut called *tsi*, which grows on a trailing vine and is so fat that if you leave a kernel of it on a piece of paper it will leave a greasy stain. Tsi is regarded by the Kung Bushmen as a very powerful food, one of the powerful veld foods in which there is a special essence, something mysterious and magic which gives them a life force all their own so that it would be dangerous to eat them during the year if this life force were not first subdued or not first integrated with the life force of the people. These foods are the mainstays of the Bushmen's diet, and are fat; and every year people in their child-bearing years, when they consider themselves subject to harm, protect themselves against these foods by a ritual act.

The act of protection is called *choa*, and it is interesting because it differs from the protective rituals performed by agricultural peoples to save their crops or animals from harm, or to cause their increase. The Bushmen choa themselves not to protect their fertility, for decrease in the number of children is not a problem to them, but to make sure that they, the young adults and mainstays of the community, will not get thin and starve.

Those whom Bushmen call "old people," adults who have had three children, are expected to protect themselves and also to protect young people of the same sex.

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

and wipes it clean with grass. Then the mother collects the stained grass, the placenta, and the bloody sand and covers them all with stones or branches, marking the spot with a tuft of grass stuck up in a bush so that no man will step on or over the place, for the ground where a child has been born is tainted with a power so strong that any man infected with it would lose an aspect of his masculinity, would lose his power to hunt. The woman does not bury the placenta, for if she did she would lose her ability to bear more children.

The moment of birth is a very important one for the child and for the mother; it is at this moment that the child acquires a power, or an essence, over which he has no control, although he can make use of it. It will last him all his life; it is a supernatural essence that forever after connects the person born with certain forces in the world around him: with weather, with childbearing, with the great game antelope, and with death, and this essence is called the *now*.

There are two kinds of *now*, a rainy or cold one and a hot or dry one. If a person has a wet *now* and burns his hair in a fire or urinates in a fire, the person's *now* is said to make the weather turn cold (if it is the dry season) or bring rain (if it is the rainy season). If a person has a dry *now* and burns hair or urinates in a fire, the *now* is said to stop a cold spell or a bad storm. When a person dies, too, the weather changes violently according to the person's *now*. After a death, scorching droughts or devastating storms are sure to follow.

We knew a Bushman woman at Gautscha whose young son was living not with her but far away with the family of his infant wife, and once, when a rainstorm came so violently that branches were splintered from the trees and water ran in torrents like waterfalls over the rocks beside the pan, the woman began to pine and grieve for her son, who, she felt

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

778 821 sure, was dead. At last a visitor came from her son's band who assured her that her son was safe and well, and she knew then that the storm was not for his *now*, loose in the air, but possibly for the *now* of someone else, though when she heard the news it did not matter to her who might have died, for she was happy.

The effect of *now* is simple when a person dies, or when a person burns his hair or urinates to change the weather. With childbearing for women and with killing the great antelope for men (as the great antelope also have *now*, although the small ones do not) the *now* has a larger, more complex effect. In these cases the *now* of the hunter interacts with the *now* of the antelope, the *now* of the woman interacts with the *now* of the child newly born, and when the blood of the antelope falls upon the ground as the antelope is killed, when the fluid of the womb falls upon the ground at the child's birth, the interaction of *nows* takes place, and this brings a change in the weather. In this way a mother may bring rain or drought when she bears a child, a hunter may bring rain or drought when he kills an antelope, no matter what kind of *now* the mother or the hunter may have. The mother or the hunter can only watch the weather to see what has taken place.

825

Now is intangible, mystic, and diffuse, and Bushmen themselves do not fully understand its workings. They do not know how or why *now* changes weather but only that it does. They watch the changes carefully, though, and by observing have discovered the limits of their own *nows*. When the fluid from a mother's womb falls upon the ground the child's *now* is determined, and it is partly for this reason that birth is such a mighty thing.

844 Birth is usually joyous. Bushmen of all ages adore their children and grandchildren, placing a child's health and

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

222 the smoke had confused them and they did not sting, although they flew everywhere looking for us. The old man turned his back, hunched his head between his shoulders, and hid from them as one would hide if one were being pelted with stones. When the swarm had dispersed a little he finished the opening. The Bushmen say that when bees are disturbed they are vicious only at first. After a while they become disorganized and confused and they fly about but do not sting you. When you smoke bees you must be careful not
778 to burn them or smoke them too much because they are
825 magic creatures with medicine to control fire, and if you harm them they will cause fire to burn you. A young boy whom we knew once burned some bees, and that night, when he was asleep by the fire, the fire sought him out and burned the skin of his belly, touching him only and no one else.

Lazy Kwi and the old man did the work perfectly. They were not stung badly, the tree was open, and no bees were seriously harmed. Inside the tree we could see the brown combs hanging and the bees as thick as fur around them. Lazy Kwi took out the combs and put them in a wooden bowl, licking his fingers afterward, and before we went back we ate some of the honey. There were two kinds, old honey and new honey, and the new honey was pale yellow and very
263 sweet and mild, winter honey made from the small, dry flowers of the veld. The old honey was much sweeter and strong enough to burn your mouth. Before we left, the old man
515 and Lazy Kwi carefully wiped their hands and arms with grass, for they were covered with honey and things were beginning to stick to them. Then we went back to camp and in the afternoon we packed to go on toward Gautscha Pan.

415 Lazy Kwi packed a skin bag full of tsi nuts and the seeds
482 of baobab fruit, alum-like powdery stones that ripen at the
222 start of the dry season. The old man had a huge net bag filled

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

had been robbing its hives of honey for years. Gao Feet said 222
that its hives were raided every few months or so and wondered if there would be any honey left for us. While pondering this question we stopped at the base of the tree and looked up, high above us, at a crack in its trunk where bees were flying, and in a moment, to my great surprise, the whole hive of them had poured down over our heads and were stinging us badly. We dropped everything that we carried and ran as fast as we could into the bushes, slapping wildly at ourselves, scattering in every direction, and each of us, as we reached thick bushes, hid in the branches, only to be routed out again by someone else pursued by bees, and in this way we were scattered further. Far from the hive though we were, the air around us was full of bees; they kept us hiding and cowering like jackals, peering out from under bushes, away from our water jars and ostrich eggs which we had dropped in our hurry, and they held us in this way for hours. We were tired 222 825 778
and wanted to go home, but we could not leave our water. I, at least, was astonished that such a thing should have happened, but to the Bushmen it was no surprise. The bees, those magic, medicine creatures, were having their revenge. As a group, we were responsible for having killed the bees of another hive. The Bushmen were only surprised at themselves for not having foreseen the disaster.

In the middle of the afternoon my brother borrowed every- 222
body's clothing and, swathing himself in it while the lenders 271
crouched naked in the bushes, braved the swarm and retrieved our water. Then we went back toward Gautscha, pausing on the way to dig a water root which Lazy Kwi had known was there. The root was quite large, very wet, and though it was as puckery as alum it did quench thirst.

Late afternoon had come now, and I was so tired that I sat 000
down to lean against a bush, where I almost fell asleep. Toma

15: Marshall E-5 (1951-1961) 1965
FX10 Bushmen FX10
!Kung

776 gods, the !Kung fear to do so because it displeases the gods and draws their attention and they say, "Who is calling my name?"

The lesser god who lives in the western sky is the namesake of the great god, who, as the belief goes, gave the lesser god all seven of his own divine names, but not his human name. Although they insist in this belief, the !Kung never used any name but */Gauwa*, one of the seven divine names, when they referred to the lesser god and we never heard them [[71]] actually use this name for the great god. It would seem, then, that the lesser god is the old evil spirit, */Gauwa*, who appears in the beliefs of the Hottentots and other Bushman language groups as the destroyer and the black chief, the one who sends death, disease, and misfortune. This evil spirit was an entity distinct from the good spirit who was variously named by Bushman groups *Hishe*, *Huwe*, and so on.

In present !Kung belief, however, neither the great god nor the lesser god is all evil or all good. Both are capable of being pleased or displeased with man and of sending favors or misfortunes. The lesser god is subservient to the great god and is supposed to do his bidding. The lesser god, however, has his own entity and does instigate his own actions, sometimes even disobeying the great god. Often they disagree between themselves.

The great god looks like a man, like a Bushman, but he is "the tallest of the Bushmen" and has long black hair that is not twisted and knotted like Bushman hair. He rides a horse across the sky—you can hear him—and he has a gun as well as bows and arrows. Some say he never comes to earth but always sends */Gauwa*, or the spirits of the dead, the */gauwasi*, [[72]] to bring the good or evil that he sends to men. Only the greatest of medicine men have ever seen him.

/Gauwa, however, is commonly seen by the medicine men. They describe him as small. One said he was about two feet tall; another, that he was as small as a guinea fowl; a third, that he was as small as a mouse. Several agreed that he was covered with yellow hairs. One, however, a humble man, said that while in trance he had seen */Gauwa* and that he was like a gray mist.

782 RELIGIOUS PRACTICES • The !Kung say that they pray spontaneously to the gods. Whenever the thought comes to them they put their prayers into words and say or think them to themselves without any formality. When they speak in prayer to the great god they address him by the respectful term *!Nau*, used for any old man, or use a title *Gaoxa* (chief), or call him [[181]] "father." Sometimes they use one of his names. The prayers, a mingling of mild imprecation and pleading, reveal the major concerns of the !Kung: hunger, sickness, and death.[11]

776 753 778 755 The great god, responsible for sending sickness and death to men, also created and gives to men a mystical curing power that is called *gaoxa*

15: Marshall E-5 (1951-1961) 1965
FX10 Bushmen FX10
!Kung

(the same word as the title of respect). The !Kung say it is strong medicine: */num*. The !Kung take for granted his giving to man both sickness and the power to cure it, and account for the power's sometimes failing to cure by saying that the all-powerful god allows it to work, or not, according to his pleasure.

He gives the curing power to medicine men (called *num kxao*, medicine owners), appearing to them (usually in dreams, sometimes in what seem to be waking hallucinations) and putting the power into them. He has also put a curing power in the medicine songs that the people sing at the dances, songs named Rain, Sun, Giraffe, Eland, Honey, Buffalo, Mamba, and Spider—all powerful things. The great god gives the power freely. It is rare to find a man among the !Kung who is not a medicine man. The function of the medicine men is only to cure. They are not sorcerers or witch doctors. (The !Kung are not a witch-ridden people.) !Kung medicine men receive no rewards or special prerogatives. They work together apparently without rivalry. The medicine men may cure at any time but their strongest curing occurs at the dance.

Whether or not anyone is sick, the people dance two or three times a month, sometimes more often. Anyone who wants a dance may start one simply by asking people to come and begin. The !Kung like to dance for many reasons. There is the inherent physical pleasure in moving to rhythm. Music and dancing are their arts, from which their aesthetic pleasure comes. The dances are also social gatherings in which all participate, men, women, children, visitors—everybody. A dance draws them together as nothing else does. Even more important is the fact that the dance is one concerted religious act of the !Kung and brings people into such unison that they become like an organic being.

At the dances not only may the sick be cured, but pending evil and misfortune averted. The !Kung believe that the great god may send */Gauwa* or the */gauwasi* at any time with ill for someone and that these beings may be lurking, awaiting their chance to inflict it. The medicine men in the dances combat them, drive them away, and protect the people.

Usually there are several medicine men performing at the same time. To cure they go into trance, which varies in depth as the ceremony proceeds. The curing cannot be described in words; it must be heard. When a man begins, he leaves the line of dancing men and, still singing, leans over the person he is going to cure, going eventually to every person present, even the infants. He places one hand on the person's chest, one on his or her back, and flutters his hands. The !Kung believe that in this way he draws the sickness, real or potential, out of the person through his own arms into himself. To demonstrate that this is in fact going on and is hard to do, he grunts with shuddering grunts that intensify in tempo and pitch into shrieks and reach a high piercing, quavering yell. Finally, the medicine man throws up his arms

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
FX13 Hottentot FX13
Nama
Bushmen FX10

boys. This particular association, in other words, is peculiar to the North-Western Bushmen; but whether it has been borrowed or is simply a local development cannot be decided in the light of our present knowledge.

Finally, the Hottentots speak also of *Heitsi Eibib*, who seems to be a sort of ancestral hero, and who is worshipped at his "graves", where he is prayed to for success in hunting, etc. His mythological character in certain respects resembles that of the Mantis among the Cape Bushmen, but the latter is not the object of a grave cult, and this *Heitsi Eibib* primarily is. There is no being corresponding to him among the Northern Bushmen, although his name occurs, obviously as a borrowed element, in the *Heiseb* of the Heikum of Etosha Pan and of North-East Ondonga (among the former as that of a "bringer of blessings", among the latter as that of an "evil spirit"!), and possibly also in the *Hishe*, i.e. *Huwe*, of the Naron and Auen. Consequently this conception must be regarded as peculiar to the Hottentots.

The resemblances noted above are far-reaching, even when allowance is made for the by no means insignificant differences in detail. The Northern Bushmen especially seem to have many elements of religious belief virtually identical with those of the Hottentots. There has certainly been a good deal of mutual influence here, but the similarities not so much in detail as in general features are too numerous and too fundamental to be attributed solely to borrowing. Meticulous comparison must unfortunately be ruled out as at present inadvisable: we know far more about the religious system of the Hottentots than we do about that of the Bushmen, of which indeed the available information is so scanty that any elaborate discussion based on it can only be regarded as somewhat speculative. It can nevertheless be fairly confidently asserted that among both the Northern Bushmen and the Hottentots we find, in addition to the worship of the moon, the cult of mythical beings derived partly from animistic beliefs (*//Gaua*), and partly from the personification of the natural forces producing rain (*Tsui //Goab*, *Huwe*). It must be concluded therefore that both peoples have on the whole the same religious system, although there are obviously also considerable differences in detail which still have to be explained. The importance attaching to this community of beliefs is emphasized by the fact that this religious system differs essentially from that of the neighbouring Bantu.

The Southern Bushmen to some extent stand apart from the rest.